

# ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

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## Guide for Students



# OUR MISSION IS YOUR SUCCESS

## **UMUC Recognizes Students on the Merits of Their Abilities Rather Than Their Disabilities**

At UMUC, our primary commitment is to maintain an educational partnership between students, faculty, staff, and administration. Accessibility Services—a unit within the Office of Diversity and Equity—understands that the term “disability” reflects many different characteristics and is an integral aspect of society and the university experience. In alignment with UMUC’s core values, the mission of Accessibility Services is to coordinate access and support services that provide an equal opportunity for students to participate in all aspects of the educational environment while adhering to the university’s academic standards.

In advancing this mission, we seek to provide reasonable accommodations and services to qualified students by

- arranging academic adjustments and accommodations as mandated under the amended Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- educating and providing guidance to UMUC faculty, staff, and administrators to promote awareness and sensitivity toward individuals with disabilities
- providing students with disabilities the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills to effectively advocate for themselves in the university community

## **Defining “Disability”**

Eligibility for reasonable accommodations is determined based on the information provided in medical or psychological documentation. Accessibility Services staff members review documentation to determine if the student meets service eligibility criteria.

As stated in the Americans with Disabilities Act, a person with a disability is defined as “a person who has or is regarded as having any mental or physical condition that substantially impairs or restricts one or more major life activity.”

## **Reasonable Accommodations**

Reasonable accommodations are modifications or adjustments that make a facility or program accessible. The goal of any accommodation is to allow a qualified individual with a disability an equal opportunity to attain the same level of performance or to enjoy the identical benefits and privileges that are available to a similarly situated student without a disability.

Accessibility Services may seek information from appropriate university personnel regarding essential standards for courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities. An accommodation is generally not considered reasonable if it would

- fundamentally alter the essential nature of the course, curriculum, or program
- pose a direct threat to the health or safety of the person with a disability or others

Accessibility Services makes the final determinations of reasonable accommodations in collaboration with the student and faculty, as needed.

## OUR MISSION IS YOUR SUCCESS CONT.

### **What Can Accessibility Services Do for You?**

If you are a prospective or enrolled UMUC student, we invite and encourage you to learn more about the variety of services we offer to individuals with documented disabilities. Visit our website at [www.umuc.edu/accessibility](http://www.umuc.edu/accessibility), or call our office at 240-684-2287 to schedule time to discuss your questions, concerns, and accommodation needs with an Accessibility Services staff member.

You must self-identify as having a disability. This means that you are the person who has to disclose to Accessibility Services that you have a disability and that you require services.

The decision whether to self-identify is a very personal one. A decision not to self-identify is understood and respected, however faculty members are not obligated to provide any accommodations if you are not officially registered with Accessibility Services.

## THE ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES REGISTRATION PROCESS

### **Complete These Five Steps to Receive Accommodations**

#### **Step 1: Submit the Student Intake Form and documentation**

After being admitted to the university, you should complete the Student Intake Form, which may be submitted digitally at [www.umuc.edu/as-intake-form](http://www.umuc.edu/as-intake-form). The form is also available as a PDF and may be submitted to Accessibility Services via e-mail to [accessibilityservices@umuc.edu](mailto:accessibilityservices@umuc.edu); fax to 240-684-2590; or mail to 3501 University Blvd. East, Adelphi, MD 20783.

If you are attending classes overseas, complete the intake form and submit your documentation to UMUC Asia at [sservices-asia@umuc.edu](mailto:sservices-asia@umuc.edu) or UMUC Europe at [studentaffairs-europe@umuc.edu](mailto:studentaffairs-europe@umuc.edu).

To request reasonable accommodations, you must provide appropriate documentation. The documentation guidelines provided in this booklet can help you in working with a medical provider or licensed professional to ensure evaluation reports document eligibility and support requests for reasonable accommodations. Accessibility Services staff members are also available to answer any questions regarding documentation.

The university will not pay medical providers or reimburse you for services rendered to meet the documentation requirements.

You are encouraged to start preparing your intake form and documentation as early as possible; some accommodations require significant planning in advance of the semester.

# THE ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES REGISTRATION PROCESS CONT.

## **Step 2: Schedule the intake interview**

After your Student Intake Form and documentation are received and reviewed, an Accessibility Services staff member will contact you to schedule an intake interview via phone or e-mail or in person. At the interview, you and the staff member will discuss your eligibility and individual needs to reach a tentative agreement on accommodations, available resources, policies, procedures, and responsibilities.

## **Step 3: Receive the Accommodation Notification Letter**

After the intake interview has been conducted, an Accommodation Notification Letter will be developed to identify the agreed-upon accommodations. You will receive a copy of the letter for your records.

## **Step 4: Communicate with faculty members**

It is crucial that you keep faculty members informed when asking for an accommodation. At your request, copies of the Accommodation Notification Letter will be distributed to them. You must meet with each of them to discuss how you intend to utilize your accommodation in the classroom each semester you are a registered student.

## **Step 5: Contact Accessibility Services each semester**

It is your responsibility to register for accommodation services each semester you are a registered student. You must also request that Accessibility Services send out Accommodation Notification Letters to your instructors prior to the beginning of each semester. After receiving your renewal request, Accessibility Services staff will review the accommodation needs for the upcoming courses. If additional information is needed to process your request, Accessibility Services will contact you.

## **Documentation Guidelines**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act allows colleges to require disability documentation to verify the need for accommodations. Follow the guidelines established by Accessibility Services as you complete the registration process.

- Documentation must be recent to assess the current impact on academic functioning.
- Documentation must be comprehensive and establish clear evidence of a significant impact on academic functioning.
- Documentation must be relevant to requested accommodations.
- Documentation must be from a medical or other licensed professional.

**Note:** If documentation is incomplete or inadequate to determine the extent of the disability or reasonable accommodation(s), Accessibility Services has the option to require additional documentation. You bear any cost incurred in obtaining additional information. Please refer to specific documentation guidelines for each type of disability found on the Accessibility Services webpage at [www.umuc.edu/as-documentation](http://www.umuc.edu/as-documentation).

For additional information, visit [www.umuc.edu/accessibility](http://www.umuc.edu/accessibility)

Contact us by e-mail at [AccessibilityServices@umuc.edu](mailto:AccessibilityServices@umuc.edu) or by telephone at 240-684-2287

### **Accessibility Services**

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### **Mailing address**

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**[www.umuc.edu/diversity](http://www.umuc.edu/diversity)**